For Christ and the Church

FOR CHRIST AND THE CHURCH

Excerpts from letters of Blessed George Matulaitis, MIC,
Renovator, Congregation of Marians
of the Immaculate Conception

CHICAGO 1999

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PREFACE

"For Christ and the Church" is the motto of the Congregation of Marians of the Immaculate Conception, the motto given to the Congregation by Blessed George Matulaitis, MIC, Renovator of the Marians. This concept is found frequently in the writings of Blessed George. He firmly believed that his life was one of service for Christ and the Church and his desire was that others be imbued with this same spirit.

During the Process for the Cause of Beatification and Canonization, many volumes resulted in the writings of George Matulaitis. Among these are letters written to others, both official and personal; these were collected for the Canonization Process.

Letters may contain maxims of importance and the recipients often put aside a thought from a letter or save the entire letter for future reflection. Some of the important spiritual works are collections of letters to one person or a group. While, initially, these letters were often private, they eventually were discovered to have a more universal appeal, whereby many others could benefit by expressions of concern and encouragement contained in them.

When George Matulaitis set out to renovate the Order of Marians, the task was anything but simple. Everything had to be done in a clandestine manner; the new religious members needed to move about cautiously until the time for their public appearance would arrive.

In this booklet are excerpts from letters written dur-

ing those difficult times of reorganization and renovation. Busy as he was, Father Matulaitis found time to write to others who either sought his advice or simply needed encouragement. One can sense the pastoral concern of Father Matulaitis even in a simple letter. It is in this sense that we hope that the reader will also find an uplifting thought to ponder in this brief sampling from the pen of a man on fire with love for Christ and the Church.

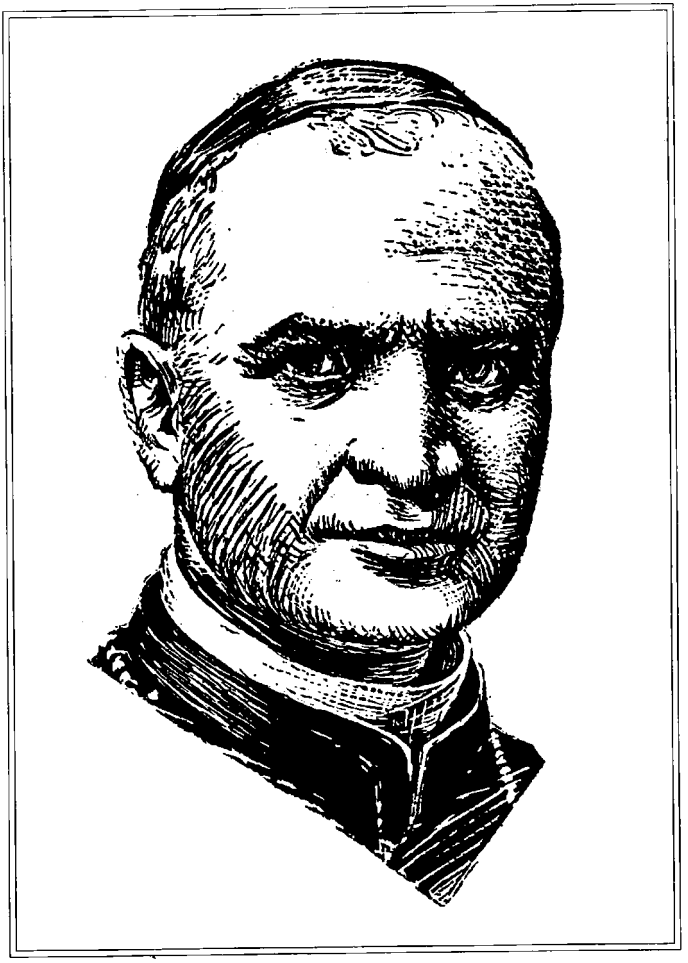
George Matulaitis, MIC, was beatified by Pope John Paul II in St. Peter's Basilica in Rome on June 28, 1987. He remains for many a man of vision in a world so in need of love, understanding, and encouragement.

I am grateful to Rev. John Duoba, MIC, John Kuprys, and Val Krumplis for their valuable assistance as well as to all those who have encouraged the publication of this booklet.

Very Rev. Donald S. Petraitis, MIC
Provincial of the St. Casimir Province

January 27, 1999
Feast of Blessed George Matulaitis, MIC

THE MAIN EVENTS IN THE LIFE OF GEORGE MATULAITIS, M.I.C.



THE MAIN EVENTS IN THE LIFE OF GEORGE MATULAITIS, M.I.C.

Blessed George Matulaitis was born on April 13, 1871 in the village of Lugine, near the city of Marijampolė, Lithuania. Eight days after his birth he was baptized in the parish church of St. Michael the Archangel by the Superior General of the Order of the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Very Reverend George Čėsna. He received the name George Boleslaus.

Lugine was a picturesque farm village of 112 acres, situated three and half miles from the parish church at Marijampolė. His parents, Andrew and Ursula Matulaitis were blessed with eight children, five boys and three girls. George was the eighth and last child born to this pious couple. In 1874 George lost his Father and in 1881 his Mother, leaving him at the age of ten, in the care of his eldest brother, John.

In 1878, at the age of eight, he was enrolled at the elementary school of Marijampolė, each day walking the entire distance to and from school. In 1882 George passed the examination required for entrance into high school.

The long walks to school, even in the worst weather, poor clothing, and impoverished conditions at home, soon impaired his health and in 1888 there followed a long illness that confined him to bed for almost 18 months. What was more painful to him was the fact that his studies had to be discontinued. From his earliest

years he had a sincere desire of becoming a priest, and though its prospects now seemed dim, nevertheless, he clung to his hope through even the darkest hours.

George was not without the aid of Divine Providence. His cousin, John, who taught classical languages in a secondary school in Kielce, Poland and the Russian language in the Diocesan Seminary, while visiting his relatives in Lugine, was persuaded of the vocation of his nephew, George. He proposed to take the young man to Kielce and to arrange for his studies at the Seminary at his own expense.

The offer was accepted by George's guardian and in 1891 he joyfully entered the Seminary at Kielce. At that time his new guardian changed the Lithuanian spelling of his nephew's name, Matulaitis, to Matulewicz.

In 1893, the Russian Government suppressed the Seminary of Kielce because its clerics were found wearing the state-prohibited scapular of the Sacred Heart. George was then transferred to the Archdiocesan Seminary of Warsaw. Here he gained distinction by his extraordinary abilities, his application to study, and, especially, by his virtue and affability.

In 1895, at the request of the Bishop of Kielce, he was admitted to the Roman Catholic Ecclesiastical Academy in St. Petersburg, Russia, where in June, 1899 he received the degree of Master of Sacred Theology with the note: "Summa cum laude, note primus." He was ordained towards the end of his studies on November 20, 1898, by Bishop Niedzialkowski.

A recurrence of his malady, diagnosed as tuberculosis

of the bone, caused Father George to seek the permission of his Bishop to go to Germany for bath cures. After a brief stay there, during which there was a general improvement in his health, he went to Switzerland for graduate theological studies at the University of Fribourg, where, in 1902, he received his degree of Doctor of Sacred Theology with the note "praeclarissime."

Upon his return to his own Diocese, he was appointed assistant in a small rural parish, a position which he held for only a short time. His bishop then sent him to the Seminary at Kielce as a professor of Canon Law and of Latin. Two years later he again became seriously ill, went to Warsaw and was hospitalized in a charitable institution of which he later became the chaplain. The Sisters of the Sacred Heart who conducted the Institute soon felt the extraordinary spiritual influence of this holy priest.

With the cooperation of the noted sociologist, Reverend Marcel Godlewski, Father George established a Catholic Association of Workers and published a magazine "The Companion of Labor." He extended his apostolic activities to the university students, organizing an association called "Rebirth." For the priests and educated catholic laymen, he organized a "Week of Sociology", composed mainly of a series of lectures, given first at Warsaw, Poland and later in Kaunas, Lithuania.

In 1907 Father George was called upon to be first to assume the new Chair of Sociology at the Ecclesiastical Academy of St. Petersburg, the first such in the entire Russian Empire. Two years later he was appointed to

teach Dogmatic Theology and in 1911 he was promoted to the Inspectorship or Vice-Rectorship of the Academy.

At the same time Father Matulaitis, feeling a call to the religious life, turned to the Order of Marians, which was now almost completely suppressed by a decree of the Russian Government. He resolved heroically to restore the Order completely in secret. Having received permission from the Marian sole survivor and Superior General, the Very Reverend Father Vincent Senkus, and furnished with a letter of recommendation from the local Bishop, Father George journeyed to Rome in 1909 to obtain from the Holy See the privilege of making his first religious vows privately and without having made the canonically required novitiate. His mission was a success; he took his first vows in the private oratory of Bishop Casimir Ruskewicz, while the Very Reverend Vincent Senkus and Father Peter Bučys were witnesses to the simple ceremony. Father Bučys began his novitiate at that time.

Soon the two eminent priests, Father Bučys and Father John Totoraitis, joined Father George. Meanwhile, the aged Superior General of the Marians, Father Senkus, passed away in April, 1911. The three remaining secretly professed members of the Community secretly assembled in Chapter the following July and elected Father George the Superior General of the Order.

His Ecclesiastical Superior consenting, in 1911, Father George went to Fribourg, Switzerland, and erected there the novitiate, which he called "House of Studies". In a short time it counted a number of excellent priests.

In 1913, at the invitation of the Lithuanian-American clergy, accompanied by two Marians, Reverend Felix Kudirka and Reverend Julius Kazakas, he journeyed to the United States,where he erected a novitiate in Chicago, Illinois, and returned to Fribourg the same year.

In 1914 he conducted spiritual exercises for the clergy of Marijampolė in Lithuania. Being unable to return to Switzerland because of the First World War, Father George founded a Marian House and novitiate in 1915 at Bielany, near Warsaw, Poland, While there, he also supervised and directed an orphanage caring for two hundred boys.

Father George was personally concerned about the orphans. He would often go into Warsaw, then occupied by the Germans, to beg for food and other provisions for the children. Oftentimes he would return in the evening sitting on a wagon filled with potatoes or coal. As a result, many stories circulated about this young priest who was unafraid of the Germans.

On one occasion he went to see a German official and asked for cots needed for the orphans. The German official, looking at Father George, yelled: "You are a priest and should trust in Divine Providence. Why are you bothering me?"

Father George quietly replied: "That is true, but Providence often works through good people."

Ashamed, the German official wrote out an order for the cots. Father George, however, kept coming back. While cursed for being a nuisance, the young priest humbly listened to the tirade and then replied: "All that

is for me, but what do you have for the children?"

On March 1, 1918 he left Bielany for Marijampolė, whose parish was administered by the Marians. Here Father George reorganized the House, founded a novitiate, and witnessed the entrance of many candidates: priests and laymen.

During this time Father George founded a new Community of religious women in honor of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Constitution of which was approved by the Bishop of Seinai on October 15, 1918.

Several years later he founded another religious community for women in Belarus, the Servants of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist. Both communities are still actively at work. As a matter of fact, Father Matulaitis assisted many religious communities to update their Constitutions to the new Code of Canon Law, about ten in all.

On October 23, 1918 His Holiness Pope Benedict XV named Father George residential Bishop of Vilnius. After his consecration in Kaunas on December 1, 1918, he made his solemn entrance into the Cathedral of Vilnius and took possession of the Diocese on December 8, 1918. During a seven year period the Vilnius City Administration changed hands a number of times: from German to Lithuanian, to Russian Bolshevik, to Polish. Under difficult and dangerous conditions the Bishop suffered repeated searchings, every kind of molestation, calumny, and persecution. All of this was overcome by the virtue of his blameless life.

In 1925, Bishop Matulaitis presented his petition for

resignation to Pope Pius XI, who, on July 14, 1925, graciously fulfilled his wish.

Freed of his other duties, Bishop George went to Rome and, first having obtained approval of the Holy Father, who on September 1, 1925 also elevated him to the dignity of Titular Archbishop of Aduli, dedicated himself to the greater welfare of his own Congregation, the Marians of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Before many months passed, Archbishop George again had to leave the affairs of his new Congregation to accept the nomination by Pius XI as Apostolic Visitator to Lithuania on December 7, 1925.

The Servant of God labored assiduously at a very delicate problem: to restore order in Lithuanian ecclesiastical affairs, and to prepare a definite plan for the creation of a Lithuanian Ecclesiastical Province, all of which he accomplished most satisfactorily. The Ecclesiastical Province was juridically erected by the Pontifical Constitution called "Lituanorum Gente" of April 4, 1926.

Lithuania was divided into five dioceses. Archbishop Matulaitis officiated at the Consecration of the five new Bishops in 1926.

Archbishop George visited the United States the second time in 1926, attending the 28th International Eucharistic Congress in Chicago. This afforded him the opportunity of visiting the Marian Houses he had established since 1913, as well as many Lithuanian parishes throughout the United States, where he was received with great joy and affection. The railway car in which he

was traveling was even painted violet in his honor. During his stay in the United States, he visited 92 Lithuanian parishes, delivered over 200 addresses, and spent much time with his growing Community.

After completing a three-month preaching and speaking schedule throughout the United States, he returned to Kaunas, Lithuania, on September 13, 1926.

The last four months of his earthly existence he spent in the routine of visiting pastors of churches and Catholic institutions in the newly formed Dioceses in Lithuania. But his most important work was the preparation of a Concordat to ease and regulate the relations between the Holy See and the Lithuanian Government. He sent the completed report to Rome on January 20, 1927, and before he could begin preparing for his return to Rome, he fell gravely ill with acute appendicitis. After submitting to an unsuccessful operation, entirely resigned to the will of God and strengthened by the last Sacraments of the Church, he passed into eternity at 3:45 a.m. January 27, 1927 in Kaunas, Lithuania, being nearly 56 years of age.

The solemn funeral took place in the Cathedral of Kaunas attended by the Lithuanian Episcopate, the Marian Community, the local clergy, the President of Lithuania, various Ministers of State and thousands of the faithful. His venerable remains were temporarily entombed in the crypt of the Cathedral.

The mortal remains of the Servant of God had further solemn obsequies when, on October 24, 1934, they were taken from the Cathedral and transferred to the city of

Marijampolė, a distance of 31 miles, to his own parish church, where he was baptized in 1871.

The following day, October 25, after the solemn funeral rites, his venerable remains were entombed in a sarcophagus of polished rose granite in the side chapel of the Sacred Heart under the constant vigilance of the Marians who cared for the parish.

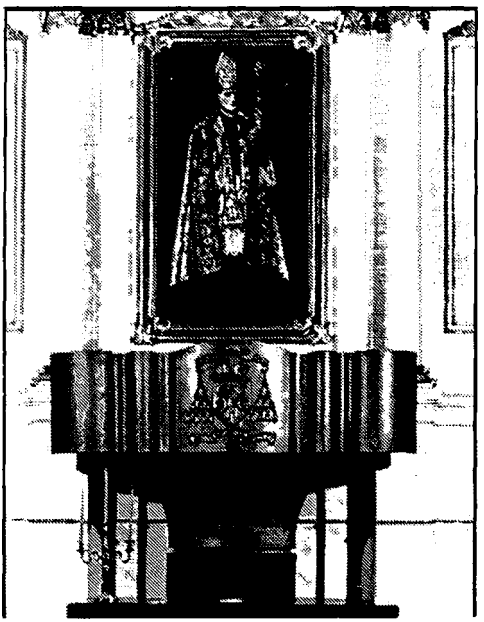
On the occasion of his Beatification in 1987, a special repository was made for his remains and a special altar constructed. The church was designated a "Minor Basilica" by Pope John Paul II and the church and burial place of Blessed George Matulaitis has become a national shrine where people from everywhere come to pray.

From the time of his death in 1927 Archbishop George Matulaitis was revered for his holiness and saintly life. Following the norms at the time, the Cause for Beatification and Canonization was opened in Rome on May 19, 1953; the process of "non-cult" was opened on June 19, 1955 and consigned to the Congregation of Rites. From the beginning all the writings of the Servant of God were collected and examined and studied. There was found nothing contrary to Faith or Morals and the Holy See issued a Decree to this effect on June 26, 1959. This was followed by the lengthy examination of his saintly life and the deposition of witnesses. A report and proof of the practice of virtue to an heroic degree was finally concluded with a Decree of heroicity of virtue, promulgated by the Holy See on May 11, 1982. The Servant of God received the title of "Venerable."

In the numerous favors granted to the faithful

through the intercession of Venerable George Matulaitis, a miracle was recognized and attributed to his intercession by a Decree from the Holy See in 1986. On June 28, 1987, Archbishop George Matulaitis, MIC, was solemnly beatified by Pope John Paul II in St. Peter's Basilica.

While many receive favors through the intercession of Blessed George Matulaitis, prayers for his canonization are requested, especially for another miracle attributed through his intercession.



Tomb of Blessed George,
St. Michael the Archangel Basilica, Marijampolė, Lithuania.

PRAYER FOR THE CANONIZATION OF BLESSED GEORGE

O most holy and indivisible Trinity, You make Your abode in the hearts of those who serve You faithfully on earth, and after death crown their merits with a reward in heaven. Grant, we humbly pray, that Your Servant Blessed George, who with the help of the Immaculate Virgin Mary served Your Church with apostolic zeal, through her intercession be crowned soon with the glory of sainthood. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be...

Prayer to Blessed George

O God, You who inflamed the heart
of Blessed George, Bishop, with an
ardent love for Christ and the Church,
grant, we pray, that by his example and
through his intercession, we may
remain untiring in following Christ
and building up his Mystical Body.
We ask this through Jesus Christ
our Lord. Amen.

PRAYER for Restoring Health

Lord Jesus Christ, You teach us that if two or three will ask for something in Your name, it will be granted them by Your heavenly Father. Encouraged by this promise, we turn to You in all confidence that through the intercession of Your faithful

servant Blessed George You would restore to health those whom we recommend to Your mercy and especially for... (here mention the name of the person you wish to pray for) who places all hope in You. In You, O Lord, we have placed our trust may we not be put to shame. Amen.

Please report all favors received through the intercession of Blessed George to the Vice-Postulator. Requests for prayer cards are also available from:

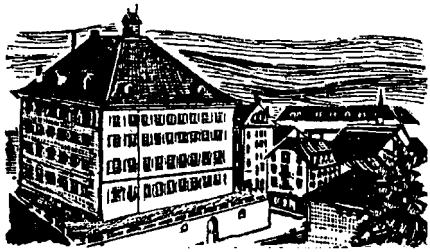
Rev. Donald S. Petraitis, MIC, Vice-Postulator
6336 So. Kilbourn Avenue
Chicago, IL 60629-5588

PRAYER FOR MARIAN VOCATIONS

O Lord Jesus Christ, Our Savior,
graciously look upon this Congregation
founded in Your name and in the name of Your
Immaculate Mother. Gaze upon, visit, and perfect
that which Your right hand has established,
multiplying its company, augmenting its joys,
and calling others from all nations.
Since it is Your house, O Lord Jesus, let no stone be
found in it which Your sacred hand has not placed
therein. Preserve and sanctify those whom You have
called, that they may praise Your holy name, accom-
plish Your work, and courageously wage Your battles.
Who live and reign the world without end. Amen.

EXCERPTS FROM LETTERS OF BLESSED GEORGE MATULAITIS, MIC

Ecclesiastical Academy
St. Petersburg, Russia



Fribourg University, Switzerland.

EXCERPTS FROM LETTERS OF BLESSED GEORGE MATULAITIS, MIC

1. From a letter to Rev. A. Čivinskas:

Perfection also means knowing how to bear your own imperfections patiently: in other words, knowing how to combat them patiently and steadfastly.

1909. 26. 9

2. From a letter to M. Ruškytė:

A heart, burning with love of God and neighbor, is worthier than the loftiest of sciences. It is important, therefore, to keep your soul pure and undefiled. But just as it is difficult to remain clean while sloshing through mud, so is it hard not to stain your soul and corrupt your character while mingling with all types of people, listening to all kinds of talk and observing all sorts of conduct.

In the meantime do not be too disturbed about the future and do not give in to fear and doubts. If man were to depend only on his own strength to do everything, we would have an excuse for becoming desperate, because we are weak. But God is our help and strength. With His aid we can do all things.

A good religious must not seek a peaceful existence, but must work and dedicate herself for God and men.

Petersburg, 1910.I. 22

3. From a letter to Rev. J. Vaitkevičius:

We are experiencing our share of all kinds of hardships and we expect to have more but up to now God has helped and blessed us. Although slowly, still the work is going forward. We are doing what we can; we want everything to go as well as possible and hope God accepts our good intentions. More and more people wish to join us but we are very careful in that respect; we would have even more candidates if we were not forced to keep hiding like sparrows.

Our Constitutions are already being printed; as soon as they are ready we shall send them to you. You will not find anything special or new in them. As directed by the Holy See, in their composition we followed the Norms as much as possible. We deleted only those things which might constrict us in our difficult life. Besides, the Rules are more of a juridical foundation and buttress for our life. We incorporated in them, therefore, whatever was law; our spirit, experiences, observations and suggestions, we plan to place into other books which will be called Instructions, as they are now commonly termed. These we shall develop together, with an eye on modern day life and demands, drawing material from our experience.

St. Petersburg, 1910.II.6

4. From a letter to Rev. J. Vaitkevičius:

I am of the opinion that not only individuals but Institutions, too, should strive to become more and more per-

fect and never remain static. We must, therefore, find out how other religious live and work, how Institutions similar to ours operate and thrive, what their good points are. When we have acquired this information we should strive to make use of it by applying it to our own life as much as circumstances permit.

I regard our Rules as something set up for the time being, so that we may have something to which we can hold. It is difficult to draw "a priori" Rules which would immediately be good enough to fit in new conditions. As far as I know, all Rules were formed gradually and were based on the experience of long years. We, too, after having lived a while and gained a bit of experience, will be able to make more suitable Rules. At present, it seems to me, the Rules are not as important as the men we have, their views and spirit, because on these men who will begin the work will mostly depend the future course, spirit and progress of the Institute.

St. Petersburg, 1910.III.11

5. From a letter to Rev. A. Čivinskas:

Although it is painful there is nothing left for us to do but to submit to God's will. I am deeply sorry for you, dear Brother; with all of us striving together we may possibly have hastened the creation of fair and favorable conditions for working for God's glory. It hurts us personally to lose an old, close friend. But what can you do? You must take the the cross that the Lord God gives you and bear it in patience. Perhaps, God willing, as time passes, the obstacles will disappear and we shall again

be able to work together.

1910.IV.13

6. From a letter to Rev. VI.:

You did well to rent a better room. One must not take one's health too lightly because it, too, is a gift of God. Let us not forget that according to the Latin maxim: Prius est esse, dein philosophari.

If you ever find yourself in difficult straits and need funds, let us know and we will share what we can with you.

1910.IX.30

7. From a letter to Rev. N. N.:

You ask how one can recognize God's will. As you yourself well know, God very rarely reveals His Holy Will directly, through Himself. Those occurrences are miraculous. Generally, God draws us to Himself and guides us to this or that way of life through holy desires, affections, aspirations, propensities, longings and so on, which He created and arouses in our heart; further, through various events in our life, through all kinds of circumstances, through other men.

But all these acts only more or less strongly awaken, urge and bend a man to this or that side: they have, so to speak, only a consultative voice. Man himself, having examined and pondered his whole life with a mind illumined by the grace of faith, having measured all things in terms of God's greater glory, that is, on the one hand,

his own perfection and salvation , and on the other, the salvation and greater welfare of men, the needs and good of the Church, must decide in what direction it would be better to tend to, on which road he should set foot. Man himself must have the final say in this matter and make the final step.

Sometimes a person very clearly sees where this final step should be made: this is a signal grace of God. But more often one wavers and doubts. Yet for the greater glory of God he should not be afraid to bear the consequences of his choice of one course or another; he must have courage enough to take a gamble, so to speak. And how often everyday life presents us with a dual choice which involves risk! Why not, therefore, take a chance for God's greater glory? Even if one were to make a mistake, God would still accept his good will.

Therefore, after considering everything carefully in the presence of God and submitting yourself completely to God in all things, do not hesitate to make your final step in one direction or another for the greater glory of God. But you must make that final act yourself; no one will make it for you. You yourself have to make the choice between the two ways. No one else can do this for you, no one else has the right. If someone did choose for you, he would incur responsibility before God and would be intruding between the Lord and you.

The same day I received your letter I happened to make my meditation on the Mystery of the Incarnation of the Lord Jesus. In the meditation the author, Father Meschler, SJ, says that Jesus had to redeem us: that was

His vocation. But the manner in which this would be accomplished He Himself freely selected, not only as the Son of God, the second Person of the Blessed Trinity, but also as God-Man. He could have redeemed us by living here on earth as a great King, or Priest or Lawgiver as were David, Solomon, Aaron, Moses, etc. But Christ freely chose His mode of life here on earth and its circumstances, His way of death, etc. All this was His own free choice.

Neither does God force any of us. We, ourselves, of our own free will, must choose our state of life and the Congregation we wish to enter. We must tend toward perfection, toward salvation, but with God's help we ourselves select our own particular vocation, our own road.

8. From a letter to Rev. P. Andziulis:

Not so long ago a young lady who is a student and wishes to serve God applied to us for aid. She needed at least fifty dollars to help her through this year. Although it is not easy for us to part with such a sum, yet recalling the words of the Gospel — "Date et dabitur vobis" (Lk. 6:38) — we promised to assist her.

Behold, unexpectedly, a priest acquaintance of ours handed us fifty dollars for the Congregation, to be used as we saw fit! And so Divine Providence repaid us at just the right time. We believe God will not abandon us in the days to come, either, as long as we strive to live continuously in closer accord with the spirit of the Gospel.

1910.XI.17

9. From a letter to Rev. P. Andziulis:

My trip to Warsaw was quite successful. His Excellency, Bishop Ruskewicz, approves of our project and work whole-heartedly; he promised us his help and his patronage in the matter of vocations.

I had a great deal to do while in Warsaw. I preached retreats, heard confessions and settled many matters. I was so busy that I sometimes had to do with only four or five hours sleep.

The Congregation I used to work for is doing well, thank God, and is continually growing stronger in organization. I found several young Lithuanian girls here, but the trouble is that most of them lack schooling. Only a few have teachers' certificates or a higher education. The others need instruction and training. Although these sisters are quite particular about the type of candidates they accept and do refuse many, they take great pains in educating the ones they accept and fashion their nuns into good workers. I believe that within a few years we shall have a fine group of industrious and useful sisters in Lithuania..

After I left St. Petersburg for Warsaw, Father Dembinski, the Vice-Rector of our Academy, resigned his position for various reasons. After conferring with the Archbishop, the Rector asked if I would accept the post. I considered the matter thoroughly in the presence of God and decided definitely I could not accept.

Someone must devote himself fully and untiringly to our project and work. This is an important task we have begun and requires serious doing. It is especially signifi-

cant to build a good beginning. It seemed to me that it would be best if I gave myself wholly to the work already initiated. I am well enough informed and experienced in the matters at hand and have worked extensively in the same field. You might say that I reorganized and, in effect, renovated that woman's Congregation which I mentioned earlier.

And then, too, Father B. is in a much better position than I to continue as a professor at the Academy. He has his matter all prepared, while I have to write out new lectures. It seemed to me, therefore, and still does, that it is I, and no one else, who must drop and abandon everything and wholly apply myself to the organization and guidance of our own life. And I am now completely convinced that such is the Will of God in this matter and that I cannot take any other course, unless God should indicate that I am wrong.

But his Excellency, the Metropolitan, did not wait for my answer, nor did he give me an opportunity to explain the facts on my return to St. Petersburg. He has summarily appointed me Vice-Rector and forwarded the documents to the Ministry for confirmation. I shall receive ratification from the civil authorities any day now.

When I returned to St. Petersburg I learned about the whole affair from friends, then from the Rector and, finally, from the Archbishop. Nothing could be done. I had to give in. But I told his Excellency that I would have to resign after the vacation and I gave my reasons. However, the Archbishop would not even permit me to explain everything. The matter was thus left inconclu-

sive. I expect to have a great deal of difficulty in shaking myself loose from this situation by vacation time. In the meantime, I shall have plenty of troubles and woes...

Remember us in your prayers, especially me, that I may succeed in the performance of my new duties and, when the time comes, that I may disengage myself from them and devote myself solely to our work and plan.

1911.I.19

10. From a letter to Rev. K. Bizauskas:

Your plan to travel to Siberia to preach missions is excellent and most noble. The same idea occurred to me more than once. But it will be practicable only when there is an organization consisting of many members. Then, with episcopal permission and the consent of the civil authorities, several priests could be assigned to visit Siberia and preach missions everywhere. Otherwise the project is hardly feasible. Siberia is divided into parishes. The local pastors — at any rate not all of them — would hardly permit a stranger to travel through their parishes. Undoubtedly, many incidents would occur.

1912.I..30

11. From a letter to Rev. J.Vaitkevičius in Warsaw:

I am of the opinion that it would be better to have fewer members as long as they are men truly practiced in self-denial, full of spirit, trustworthy, men who would be unafraid to give up not only their comforts, but even their health and life, if need be, for the glory of God and

the salvation of souls.

In our day and in the present condition of the Church, ordinary workers are not enough; we need real apostles. We must be wary of men of meager spirit: not only are they pedestrian and inactive themselves but they also later become a drag on others.

1912.VIII. 24

12. From a letter to Rev. P. Bučys:

We are better off with only a few working as long as they are men of good spirit, self-denial, who, in case of need, are unafraid of suffering, of working or of sacrificing their health and life for God's Church. We must be very wary of men of poor spirit. In our situation it is not enough to have good hirelings; we need men who have the spirit of the apostles.

1912. VIII. 24

13. From a letter to Rev. P. Bučys:

What can you do, Brother? "Per multas tribulationes oportet intrare in regnum coelorum" (Acts. 14:21). The cross, adorned as it is sometimes with flowers, looks handsome, of course, but only in pictures. The real cross, the cross of life, is always heavy and weighs one down.

I do not know what I would have done in similar circumstances. When I heard from a trustworthy priest friend for the first time that I would not even get my approbation, I was very hurt; I was really so sick that I walked about in a daze for two weeks. But it turned out well. I took a deep look at myself, my life, my words and

my actions. I began to accept such insinuations with equanimity and even became so accustomed to them that later more grievous faultfinding and suspicions hardly made any impression.

Perhaps God has also heavier crosses in store for you and this is only an introduction to condition you. Keep in mind only that all things turn out well for those who love God.

1912.IX.20

14. From a letter to Rev. J. Vaitkevičius:

Do not forget that health is also a gift of God and as such must be cherished. It would be better to labor ten years or more longer than to burn out quickly in a few months.

1912.XII.9

15. From a letter to Rev. P. Bučys:

With the approach of the Christmas season, may I extend you heartiest greetings from myself and from all your acquaintances. May the Lord God grant you the health you need to work many more years for God's greater glory and the Church's welfare!

I heard from Johnny that your health has not been too good and that you have been complaining about your throat. You had better see a doctor, Brother, before complications set in. If you feel that your health is not improving, call off the various lectures and retreats you have on schedule and when summer comes go some-

place where you can really rest and recuperate. You could even come here. My brother, you have been working now without a break for some years, vacation or no vacation. You will not be able to work much longer that way. Think it over thoroughly, therefore; you must not ruin your health. Remember that health is a gift of God that is to be used prudently, so that it might last as long as possible in the service of God.

Fribourg, Switzerland
1912.XII.19

16. From a letter to Rev. J. Totoraitis:

For a long time I have been meaning to talk with you about those matters which you touched on in your other letters: relations among the nationalities in our Community.

I have been and still am worried about this matter. I have thought a great deal about it myself and have discussed it with others. I have prayed much, too. I asked the Lord God to enlighten us so that we may not make a misstep or leap too much toward one side or another. And I have not ceased praying. I, myself, and some of the other brethren have even been the object of all kinds of accusations and rumors in this same concern. At times it was very painful. I hope the Lord God accepts our little crosses and helps us find the right road. There is plenty of good will among us and God blesses good intentions. It is good that you began to deliberate about this thing.

A religious must be the representative, servant, de-

fender and herald of supernatural life... the Church is our Mother. Her crosses and sufferings should be our aches and pains; Her needs, our needs; Her troubles and cares should be our trials and anxieties; Her joys, our happiness... We should live and work primarily for the Church, and if need be, die for Her. We should fear only one thing: to pass through this life like a shadow without having done anything for God's glory or for the Church, that Kingdom of God here on earth.

Applying the words of the Psalmist to the Church, we should cry: "si oblitus fuero tui Ierusalem, sancta Dei Ecclesia, oblivioni detur dextera mea; adhaereat faucibus meis lingua mea, si non meminero tui, si non prospuero Ierusalem in principio laetitiae meae"(Psalm 136:5).

I cannot even find words to express the love that I would wish to have myself for our dear Mother, the Church, so that I could implant it in others. Nowadays, as always, the Church unites and welcomes under its wing all the various nations on the face of the earth. It seems to me that this love of Christ and of the Church will be powerful enough to unite and conciliate men of different nations also in our Congregation. We have ample room for everybody; we have as much work before us as we all can possibly do. If we only never forget that we are gathered together not to engage in politics, nor to judge nations, nor to enter into their disputes and quarrels, not to regulate their relations, but solely to work for the salvation of souls, to bring Christ's doctrine and spirit wherever we can — then there would be few or no opening for us to argue about national matters, to pro-

voke or look down on one another.

... Men of all different nations should strive to live in harmony and work together for the Church in the same religious community ..., because they are united by the higher ideals of Christ and the Church.

Even when violent quarrels, wars and bloody battles arise among nations, religious know how to live and work together in harmony.

... We must be continuously united and kept united by higher ideals. I believe in the might of ideals.

You write, Brother, that men often know how to hurt and take advantage of others under the cover of lofty and holy motives. You are right. That is the most detestable, the most disgraceful debasement of an ideal.It is something to fear and guard against.

But it happens more frequently still that because of passions, because of this world's goods and demands, because others toppled the ideal by dishonoring and exploiting it, men renounce the ideal entirely, quit loving and serving it. This is even a greater danger. I fear it more.

I agree with you that our entire life should be well determined in all its details and bound by certain regulations. Ideals alone are not enough, at least not for a longer period of time: They may fire men's hearts and keep them united for a while, but ordinarily, as time passes, men's hearts have a way of cooling; hence, they need also the compelling bonds of precepts to hold them together.

But neither can we live without ideals and spirit. Even

the best Rule will not avail much if ideals lose their luster, if the spirit weakens and dies. Ideals and spirit can substitute for laws in Religious Orders, as they actually have, for longer intervals of time; but laws alone, even though they may be the best, the most minutely devised, cannot make up for the lack of spirit. Naturally, we need laws and we must strive to make ourselves the most perfect we can: in the life of society they are a stronghold, a buttress and a sanctuary. But only the true spirit of Christ, the pure, sublime ideals of the Church must remain our life, our real power and might. We must take care not to transgress the ideals which Christ has indicated to us.

It seems to me that men attack us because they regard the Congregation from the aspect of international relationships rather than from the viewpoint of the principles of faith and of the Church. Although the Congregation is in "hoc mundo," yet it should not be "de hoc mundo" (John 8:23): Its ends and ideals reach much higher and its field of work is different.

... Since many are so very absorbed themselves in national relations, they imagine everyone else's interest is national policies; it seems that they cannot even conceive that some people exist who are not in the least concerned with the destruction or establishment of alliances, but are anxious about an entirely different matter: the work of the Church, the arousal, preservation and augmentation of Christ's spirit in those nations.

Years ago I used to dislike Jews; there was a time when I disliked Russians and Poles. But God enlight-

ened me, granted me the grace to understand that such an attitude was not consonant with the doctrine of Christ, Who commanded us to love every neighbor like ourselves; Who commanded us even to love our enemies, to pray for them and to do good to them. From that time, thank God, I shook off all prejudices and dislikes. And experience has taught me that there are good people everywhere, good devout Catholics in every nation who want to serve God and with whom it is possible to work in harmony.

It is evident that all things in a Religious Order must also be based on justice. We must see to it that no one is wronged or hurt, that men of different nations can thrive and work among us equally well. But we need love, too; we will get nowhere without it. I am thinking of the true love of Christ... In our times we see so much self-love, hate and anger in the hearts of individuals as well as of whole nations. I hope we, at least, can live by the true love of Christ in our Community and avoid sinning against His Commandments and ideals. "By this will all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another"(John 13:35).

"Mandatum novum do vobis, ut invicem diligetis, sicut ego dilexi vos. Rogo, Pater, ut omnes sint unum sicut ego et Tu unum sumus. Omnium credentium erat cor unum et anima una: omnes erant idipsum sentientes; perseverabant in communicatione panis et in oratione" (John 13:34; Acts 2:42).

We are not permitted to renounce this unity of Christ. According to St. Paul: "Omnes in Ecclessia sive iudaei, sive gentiles, sive liberi, sive servi — unum sunt in

Christo" (1 Cor. 12:13). This does not mean that we may hurt one another under the cover of these words of love, or that we should submit to injustice; we must hold to justice and to the other virtues. However, if we do not have love, all our efforts will be for naught. "Nisi caritaten habuero — ero sicut aes sonans, sicut cymbalum tinniens, nihil ero"(1 Cor. 13,1).

Although we are men of different nations, we in the Congregation should so love one another with the true love of Christ, that others, regarding us, would say, as was observed about the first Christian: "see how they love one another!"

We must hold to the principle that we are not uniting... with nationals, but with Catholics of various nations: we are uniting, therefore, to serve God and the Church, because our Mother the Church is in distress everywhere.

We do not renounce love for our own country. According to the doctrine of St. Thomas, love of country "pertinet ad virtutem pietatis." Hence, in our quest for perfection, we cannot neglect this virtue either. It seems to me that in this regard everyone of us could serve his own country best by making it his first concern to give her the doctrine of Christ, to bring in Christ's spirit wherever he can, scorning no respectable toil, no honest means.

Just as for individuals, so for nations: "Non est salus in aliquo alio nisi in Jesu Christo." — Querite primum regnum Dei, et cetera vobis adicientur"(cf. Act 4, 12, Mt. 6:33, Lk 12:31).

Although Christ Himself was directly concerned only

with the establishment of God's kingdom in men's souls here on earth, that is, His holy Church; although He served only supernatural ideals, yet no one did more good for humanity in all spheres of life than Christ.

We may say the same also about the Catholic Church. Can one give his nation anything more sublime or more important than Christ's doctrine and spirit? Then the other things seem to come and fit in by themselves. We should not, therefore disdain the other things: any good works, any good means. "Omnia vestra, vos autem Christi. Christus vero Dei"(1 Cor. 3:23). We can and ought to engage in any work by which we may please and serve God and men.

We do not renounce love for our own country and we are resolved, if and when possible, to return men to their own countries to work among their own people, among their countrymen.

But it seems to me that love of ones's country can and should exist without hate and disdain toward other nations: while loving our own, we should also wish others well. We religious, especially, must desire and prayerfully do our utmost to propagate God's glory and to spread God's Kingdom everywhere, to help the Catholic Church grow and flourish. While loving and serving our own countrymen, we must not forget the common needs of all Christendom: wherever we can and as much as we can, we must help in the salvation of the souls of other people, "ut omnes perveniant ad agnitionem veritatis."

That is why the Church never lacks for noble souls who willingly leave the land of their fathers and go forth

to preach the doctrine of Christ to pagans; particularly among religious there is no lack of such men.

I trust that our love of country, being true and according to the spirit of Christ, will not make our hearts ungenerous or hard: I trust that we, too, will be ready, wherever we are needed, to serve others and help save the souls of men of other countries.

1913.I.8

17. From a letter to Rev. Bučys:

We must never tread uncertain paths and by-paths. And if some matter should come up it would always be best to confer with his Excellency, the Bishop, and follow his advice; so, be careful. All kinds of diplomatic and political routes do not please me and I have no faith in them. Best to do your work, adhere to the bishops and consult with them: they are the real representatives of the affairs of the Church and the true leaders in ecclesiastical matters.

1913.I.8

18. From a letter to Rev. P. Bučys:

It seems to me that you are perhaps too sensitive to certain trifles, that you become angry and hurt too quickly. I try to overlook such little things. I do not even show I feel them. I have discovered this to be the best way with people; often when they have composed themselves they wish to repair the harm done and afterward become milder and more courteous. "In patientia vestra

possidebitis animas vestras." No matter where he is, man cannot escape his share of smaller or larger crosses; they are to be found everywhere and in many assorted sizes.

1913.II.11

19. From a letter to Rev. J. Novickas at Pajevone:

Wherever we come in contact with people we should always have a good word for them: tell them how Catholics live, work, and serve God elsewhere; instruct the children wherever possible; teach them how to do better. Often even a few cheerful, sincere words, reach the heart and in time bring forth fruit. One's spirit merely needs arousing and refreshing. Every parish contains a number of really pious souls who desire to follow the road of perfection and to dedicate themselves wholly to God. Once such souls have received some training and their hearts have become enkindled with the love of God, they can be formed into a little unit and taught what needs to be done for the greater glory of God and the welfare of the Church. And it often happens that the efforts we put into the sound spiritual formation and training of one soul give us, later, a worker through whom we can accomplish a great deal of good. It is possible to find excellent and talented young men and women and to make them useful workers for God and the Church. If you should happen on souls of such promise, mold them gradually.

1913.II.12

20. From a letter to John Matulaitis in Warsaw:

In my life since I became a priest I have not desired or sought any honors or great wealth; I have only wished to bring more glory to God and more good to the Church. When I myself became convinced and other sober minds concurred that by leaving my high position at the Academy (St. Petersburg) and by going abroad I could accomplish more good, I did so straightway, without regrets, without wavering. The work here has been difficult and it still is; I have had a great deal of difficulty and I still have. But I do not mind. I dedicated myself to Christ, Who took the way of toil, of hardships and of the cross and I intend to follow Him as long and as much as I can. What fruit my efforts will bear, only God knows. I dedicate all things to Him; He will, undoubtedly, accept my good intentions.

1913.III..27

21. From a letter to Rev.J. Totoraitis:

I, too, am very sorry about the death of Father Anthony Civinskas. I got the sad news from Father Vincent. All that night I slept but little; instead, I prayed for the repose of Father Anthony's soul and meditated.

He was so close to us: he was ready to join us in St. Petersburg when his brother-in-law's death prevented him; he was so sorry for his sister's children that he remained to help raise them. Informing us of his decision he then wrote: "Man proposes, God disposes." How very true! All things are in the hands of Divine Provi-

dence! No matter how useful and necessary a man might be, no matter what grand plans he may have had, death comes along; God's will is done. In death we must abandon all things, bid them all adieu. There is only One Who remains absolutely necessary, without Whom no one can be — all other things are but instruments to serve Him.

I am sorry about Father Anthony. He was a man of good heart, high, noble sentiments and great talents; he loved God, the Church and served souls: no wonder people showed him such respect.

I am sorrowful about Father Anthony's death, but what can you do? We must agree with God's Will. He knows what is best. We who have lost a good worker must strive to groom others to take his place. God grant that we find good ones!

This world and its spirit are dreadful. It is no wonder that Christ denounced the world and bade us to be on our guard against it, to fear and despise it: mundus in maligno positus. Before the evil spirit entices man and draws him into his vortex, he shows and offers man wondrous goods, promises him heaps of gold; but once he has man caught in his toils, he devours and destroys him and then casts him aside like a rotted apple; or having sucked him dry of juices, he spews him forth like husks.

Christ's way with us is entirely different. He clearly tells and shows us what this world has in store for us. He enjoined us to renounce ourselves, to take our cross upon our shoulders, to die like the seed which falls to

the ground, to abandon all things — but for this He promises a hundred-fold in return and the Kingdom of heaven besides.

And Christ keeps His promise! Although the man who follows Christ has to endure many hardships and toil assiduously, he receives in return manifold blessings, consolations, joy and peace here on earth; besides, heaven awaits him in eternity. "Vanitas vanitatis et omnia vanitas praeter amare Deum et Ei soli servire"(Eccles. 1:2).

The same thought strikes me as I read what you write about possible candidates for the Cathedral Chapter. True, it would be good and ideal if really sound and worthy men got to occupy those positions; it would edify and greatly fortify all the clergy. But, it seems to me, that because such is not the case we should not lose hope nor lament overmuch. They are, Brother, the personages who although adorned with gold and silver on the outside, have clay feet like the statue mentioned in Holy Writ: they soon crumble!

Our true strength is that which Christ indicated to us: lively faith (haec est victoria quae vincit mundum — fides nostra) (cf. 1 John 5:4) self-denial and love (dilectio fortis ut mors). What significance have all the powers of the world against this might? They are specks of dust, emptiness, nothing.

You, Brother, can get closer to the hearts of young people than others. Arouse in them a vigorous faith, the kind that moves mountains. Teach those young men to renounce and sacrifice themselves; enkindle the love of

God in their hearts, that fire which may consume the man himself, yet inflames others. If only the seminary could produce two or three such priests each year, we would then have nothing to fear: they are the real strength—" ex semine eorum, per quos salus venit venit in Israel."

His enemies fell upon Christ with the whole weight of their hatred: true, they overpowered Him, threw Him down and nailed Him to the cross, had Him executed and bore Him to the tomb which they sealed with a stone. But could they destroy His spirit? After His resurrection Christ revived all.

Let us recall the valiant St. Paul. What did not the Jewish leaders and later the pagans try? They threw him out of synagogues, chased him from city to city, flogged him, stoned him, imprisoned him but did St. Paul cease working and did he accomplish little?

We need spirit, Brother, spirit! Nothing can stifle it. I do not find it so alarming when a man who is unfit becomes a member of the Chapter,... but I am appalled when I hear that the spirit of unbelief is spreading among the youth, even in the villages, that moral laxity is growing: these are forces which destroy nations. A man who has no faith or morality cannot have a real, sincere love for his country or serve society as he should." Non datur salus in aliquo alio nisi in Jesu Christo"(cf. Acts 4:12).

But in the final analysis it is not for us to judge and weigh men: "quis te constituit iudicem super Israel?" (cf, Acts 7:27, 35). We can but pray in silence that everything

turns out for the greater glory of God and strive to perform our own duties ever better.

I am sad not so much because things are not going as they should but because priestly spirit is on the decline and priests are becoming disheartened. Except for the spirit of unbelief and licentiousness we have no more terrible foes than despair and pessimism.

Therefore, Brother, shout it, at least when you are talking to the youngsters: "sursum corda!".

1913.IV.11

22. From a letter to Rev. V. Dvaranauskas in Pilypava:

It would be better to have only a few working in smooth harmony for the glory of God than to fret and worry later over a collection of many misfits.

1913.IV.12

23. From a letter to Rev. Staniukynas in Chicago:

There is no great hurry about the purchase of land or building. When we arrive we shall discuss the matter. But we have no money at all. We are concerned that we will have enough with which to reach America; after that the good Lord will have to provide for us and feed us. If God only gives us health we will earn our bread. We will be very grateful if, at least in the beginning, you give us a place to stay and a bite to eat. We are not fancy folk and will be satisfied with anything at all.

1913.IV.13

24. From a letter to Rev. P. Bučys:

Your health worries me very much. You seem to be exceedingly afraid of taking a vacation; burdened as you are with so much work , how will you last? A man cannot keep... going for long at such a pace. My health, as you know, is also ragged; I am holding on fairly well but every so often I feel somewhat unwell. And our health is so very necessary just now!

Let us, therefore, use this gift of God prudently. All things are in the hands of Divine Providence and God can get along without all of us, but we must strive to live according to the precepts of Divine Providence, that is, we must employ our energies judiciously, so that we may have as long a time as possible to work for the glory of God.

So, Brother, you, too, had better see to it that you do not break down because you are needed very much. I am very apprehensive as to how you will last much longer, working the way you are. Lately, for some reason, I miss you and often think about you. You were always dear to me, Brother, but you have now become dearer, more necessary and closer to my heart.

1913.IV.22

25. From a letter to Miss Minetaite in Obeliai:

Remember that a smaller or bigger cleavage always exists between an ideal and our own life. Who can say that he has attained his ideal? The greatest saints felt like

weak creatures and sinners. They often complained and lamented that they were still so far away from Christ. St. Paul, himself, complained that he was tormented by temptations; and he said that he did not always do that which he had seen and praised. We are constantly but striving to attain perfection; we never can say that we have reached it.

Strive, therefore, to become ever more perfect and to rise ever higher. Do not be so worried about how far you still have to go. God rewards us for effort and good will. As you observe your weaknesses and imperfections, therefore, abase yourself the more before God. The Lord, seeing your humble heart, will not spurn you.

But you must never despair on account of your defects and failings. The weaker we feel ourselves to be, the more should we confide in God. He is our strength and salvation. Valiantly cry out in the words of St. Paul: "I can do all things in him, who strengthens me." And fight. God will not abandon you.

I wrote you before that the evil one often attempts to make the life, station or vocation in which a person is, seem ugly and drab but shows us the golden apples of elsewhere and promises us paradise. Satan has enticed more than one person out of the monastery in this manner. That you are on the wrong road, that you have missed your vocation, are whisperings of the evil one.

1913.V.16

26. From a letter to Rev. J. Totoraitis:

Naturally, no one likes to hear talk against people he loves or against his country. However, what else can one do but bear it? "In patientia vestra possidebitis animas vestras" (Luke 21:19). Formerly I, too, was wont to be very hurt when I heard such words. But now when I hear them somewhere, they make little or no impression on me: in one ear and out the other. I comfort myself with the thought that such remarks cannot really change us for better or for worse. Let them talk as much as they wish; let us mind our own affairs and strive constantly to become better men. So, there is no reason to be upset.

Christ said: "orate pro persequentibus vos et calumniantibus"(Luke 6:28). If we heeded this precept we would gain much: at least our own hearts would not become corrupt.

Life is not Paradise, men are not angels and we cannot live without crosses. We must try to learn how to bear all crosses patiently and calmly. How serene the Lord Jesus always was! How often the victim of men's knavery and wickedness, yet, He never ceased loving and serving men; He died for them even though He knew and saw their ingratitude and selfishness. This love of Jesus is an incomprehensible mystery of His heart. Of all men, perhaps the Lord alone joined the knowledge of men with love of them. He alone knew men down to their very depths and in all their dark aspects. Although He experienced their dreadful ingratitude and deceit, He never stopped loving them; He died for them out of love; He remained in the Blessed Sacrament out of love.

Jesus thoroughly realized Judas' infidelity but, nevertheless, permitted Himself to be kissed because He desired to overcome obstinacy with love. We, ordinarily, do the opposite: the closer acquainted we become with even a good man and the more we learn about his imperfections, the quicker we cool toward him, the weaker grows the love in our hearts. And what of those who insult and hurt us?

We are so far, Brother, still so far from the true spirit of Christ! That embittering sourness of hate which we allow to prevail in our hearts, hurts us more than it does those who offend us; it corrodes and spoils our own hearts and often does not affect our enemies in the least. Brother, strive to cultivate peace in your heart, the true peace of Christ which the world cannot give, and does not know. If you can, sow and nurture that peace among others. Christ continually greeted the apostles with the words: "Pax vobis, peace be to you." He constantly offered them peace: "Pacem meam do vobis..." Evidently, this peace which Christ gave to His apostles was a precious thing.

As we observe how men of our own day feud, quarrel and vilify one another; how, filled with hatred, they plot against one another, we are sad and anguished. How distant we are from Christ's spirit, from the example of the first Christians who were nourished by one spirit, so united and bound by ardent love that even the pagans marveled.

We must pray God for more peace. Naturally, it is difficult to change others, but we can learn to see and yet

not to see, to hear and yet not to hear, to bear all that chicanery and wickedness with equanimity, without brooding over them. You can attain this peace by uniting with the Sacred Heart of Jesus, by dedicating the sorrows of your heart to Him.

1913.V.17

27. From a letter to Rev. J. Naujokas in St. Petersburg:

You wrote me some time ago, Brother, mentioning obstacles and difficulties. Indeed, there is no lack of them. I once used to think that men obstruct others only when they see them rising high and charging toward better positions. I am now convinced that men become much angrier and interfere much more when they see others trying to follow in the footsteps of Christ even from afar. What can you do? Perhaps this world was always like that; it will probably remain that way.

And, Brother, I am becoming more and more convinced that truly: "omnia vanitas vanitatum praeter amare Deum et Ei soli servire" (Eccles. 1:2); that all things are in the hands of Divine Providence; that unless He wills it, not a hair falls from one's head; that God is wonderful and wonderful are His ways.

Although at times things were difficult and painful up to now, I have not regretted nor do I regret coming here. What the results of my work will be, only God knows. "Neque qui plantavit est aliquid... sed Deus qui dat incrementum" (I Cor. 3:6). If such be His holy will, everything will go well and nothing will stop us; and if it be not, then I trust that God will accept our good intentions. God may have been sending us many crosses up to this

time, but He has also been helping us wonderfully.

1913.V.29

28. From the letter to Rev. Kasparavičius:

Organization gives religious extraordinary power, but, naturally, only if all pull as one. While ordinary man works alone and often has no one to help him, in a Congregation work is a community effort, a matter of mutual support; much more, therefore, can be accomplished.

But it is evident that if a Congregation is to bestow all these advantages on a man, monastery walls and investiture with monastic garb are not enough; a man must be trained and developed: his spirit must be continuously stimulated and maintained. We know from experience how much effort must be expended before a man is trained and prepared for work, how much we must pray and toil. That is why we would rather deny ourselves edifices and robes so that we might have more latitude to train our men as thoroughly as possible.

Because of our trust in Divine Providence we are not at all concerned about the personal wealth of our candidates. The assets we prize and desire most in a candidate are a sound mind, good will and piety; we want a candidate to be unafraid of dedicating himself wholly to God, the Church, and the Congregation —" ut mortuus sibi vivat Deo" (cf. Rom. 14:7-9).

We wish to be religious who can be active even in the most difficult conditions. We have a bare minimum of external forms so that we may be able to penetrate everywhere and adapt ourselves to the most severe and de-

manding circumstances. For this reason we concentrate on the formation and perfection of the spirit of our members. We rely very strongly on obedience, submission to the direction of superiors, communication with them, rendering them reports on our life and activities so that we may look after, teach, and admonish one another.

1913.VI..4

29. From a letter to Rev. V. Jurgutis in Munich:

We are coming along passably here and keep striving to push forward. All beginnings are difficult and ours is no exception. As time goes on I trust in God and His Providence more and more. I believe that all that storm which was raised against us, helped us considerably. Perhaps it frightened a good man or two away from us, but I perceive that it also prevented some from joining who would perhaps have harmed us more than all those attacks. And in other matters God's help is truly wonderful; gradually we will perhaps be able to get our work really underway.

1913.VI.13

30. From a letter to J. Matulaitis in Warsaw:

People are fond of discussing and criticizing everything and everybody, so, naturally, they say all kinds of things about me, too. I can only tell you this, dear Brother, that I did not take the important step that I did, without a great deal of thought, without conferring with prudent and devout men and without Rome's knowledge

and encouragement. Whether anything will come of my difficult and arduous work, only God knows — He Who gives fruitfulness to all things.

Although people call my work an empty dream, I have not time to dream. I have to work hard from morning to night and rarely find time even to go out for a walk. While I am primarily serving the Church because I am a priest, yet I believe that I will not forget Lithuania and will one day be of service to her if the Lord deigns to bless my work. Even if nothing results from my toil and hardships, I thing God will at least accept and reward me for my good intentions — and this should be of paramount importance to us all.

The judgment of God is one thing my dear Brother, that of men, another. My conscience tells me that I am on the right road. The Church authorities encourage me. For the time being, that is enough for me. I never did crave wealth, glory, or high positions and I seek them even less now; my only interest is to please God, to be able to do something good for the Church and men. What men will say about me is their own affair.

1913.VI.20

31. From a letter to Rev. P. Bučys in St. Petersburg:

Right after my arrival in Chicago I began to work. I directed a ten day retreat for the Sisters of St. Casimir. God blessed, us as the fruits of the work were good. I also preached several sermons and heard the whole Community's confessions a few times. Besides, I corrected, completed and coordinated their Constitution ac-

cording to canon law and the requirements of the Church. In three parishes I gave lectures on social questions. In Brooklyn I preached two sermons in church and gave a lecture in the parish hall; the lecture was quite stormy because the socialists kept badgering me, but it all ended harmlessly enough. I am of the conviction now, however, that such lectures do not produce much good: a specially prepared mission would be better for the people.

1913.IX.8

32. From a letter to Rev. Dvaranauskas in Pilypava:

We may as well resign ourselves to the fact that man cannot live without crosses and hardships. We cannot please all men; not even Christ could.

The voyage to America was quite successful. I did not become sick on the way but my head became dizzy, heavy, and rather uneasy. I made the most of the trip. I struck up an acquaintance with a Marist Brother, a man of experience, and learned many good things from him... My work in America is going well; I conducted a ten day retreat for the Sisters of St. Casimir. I finally put their Constitution in order. I delivered lectures in three places in Chicago and preached a pair of sermons in Brooklyn.

1913.IX.8

33. From a letter to Rev. Novickas in Pajevone:

You must watch and control your nerves to keep

them from being damaged; a nervous priest is a hardship to himself and to others. Whenever you feel tired try to get some rest; you will be able to work longer and your work will perhaps be better. Do not mind too much being ridiculed by other priests; that type always mocks zeal and sometimes even persecutes it.

1913.IX.23

34. From a letter to L. Bistras:

You must remember that in the matter of vocation, except for very rare, extraordinary and even miraculous cases, we can have neither physical nor metaphysical certitude, but only moral. In other words, with the help of God's grace, man must himself select his state and way of life. The future is unfathomable; it is difficult to predict what will be. Man, therefore, often hesitates and doubts when he ought to venture and dare. But man must take one road or another by himself, of his own volition. Theologians console those in doubt by saying: "Elige quod vis, et gratia Dei non deerit." In the selection of a vocation the most important thing is a sincere, genuine intention: God, then, grants His graces, and most abundantly, if man decides to strive for a more perfect state, a way of life which ordinarily is a surer road to salvation. God then blesses man's good desires and efforts.

It seems to me that your doubts stem from the fact that your life is much too dominated by self; your life revolves about your person as on an axis. You would like to put yourself and your life into a kind of bank so that your ego might realize as much interest as possible. You

would like to protect and insure yourself well so that your ego would not perish or meet with an accident. But even the most cautious of men are sometimes unable to protect their wealth.

You must not be afraid to take a chance for the glory of God. Christ clearly says: "Nisi frumentum cadens in terram mortuum fuerit, ipsum solum manet"(John 12:24). Only when it has fallen to the ground, died and decayed does the grain bring forth new life and fruit from itself. Do not wish to protect yourself so very much and do not be afraid to immerse yourself in God and die to yourself for God's sake — then, when you become a priest, you will give forth much fruit.

You ask where you could do more good for society. It is difficult to say. In my opinion you could do nothing more noble and grand for society than to give it the doctrine of Christ and teach it Christian virtues. "Quaerite primum regnum Dei, cetera vobis adicientur" (cf. Mt. 6:33, Luke 12:31). Man's influence on others and the fruitfulness of his work are things ordinarily most difficult to weigh or measure. Neither must we be misled by that which glitters or is held in high esteem by men. In reality he who does the will of God accomplishes much. Often a priest can benefit society much more by converting one soul than by establishing any number of organizations or retail co-operatives, although the latter are, of course, useful things and must not be belittled. But what I wish to indicate here is that the matter of influence is hard to determine: it is an imponderable which will be explained in eternity.

1913.IX.29

35. From a letter to Rev. Dvaranauskas in Pilypava:

It seems to me that newspapers should at least be scanned for the sake of orientation on our work. We should not, of course, spend a great deal of time on them but inspect them we should, and whenever we find something worthwhile, we ought to read it through.

Moreover, we should find time every day or at least every other day for more serious reading. Without it a man's mind becomes very shallow and vain.

Whether it is worthwhile to visit the Mariavites* is hard to determine; depending on the circumstances, do as you deem best.

You should visit not only your true Catholic parishioners who belong to the Church but also the errant sheep who live within the boundaries of your parish. You must strive to draw them back to the Church "ut fiat unum ovile et unus pastor"(John 10:16).

I knew a pastor who visited not only Catholics but heretics, strayed sheep and even Jews — if he were asked and could find the time. He sometimes succeeded in retrieving a lost one and brought it back to the Church. You must strive to introduce Christ and His spirit everywhere you can and draw men to Him in every virtuous way.

1913.XI.17

* From the Latin 'Mariae vitae': followers of Mary's life. A pseudomystic sect which became active in the early twentieth century in Poland.

36. From a letter to Rev. Vaitkevičius in Czestochowa:

We need patience, too. Once we start a task, trusting in God's help, we should stubbornly bring it to its conclusion. If it is not a success, we will at least have the consolation that it is not our fault: we will perceive that it was not in God's will.

1913.XI.20

37. From a letter to Rev. P. Bučys:

As for those honors offered you, I take this view: if those trifles are vitally necessary to the glory of God and the welfare of the Church, which is in such dire straits in our part of the world, then we must be ready to wear not only decorations but sackcloth and chains also. I am positive that it is better to wear irons and rags than gold and silks because the former are not good company for self-love. But God's glory and the Church's good must be our "lex suprema."

1913.XII.1

38. From a letter to Rev. Totoraitis in Seiniai:

Man would become spoiled if God did not chastise him at times. I wonder if our ... priests would have exercised their ministry so successfully if there had not been someone to discipline them. Only one thing is really necessary: a good spirit, the spirit of God and the Church. Then no persecutions are frightening: they even turn out

to our benefit. And so, Brother, you, too, stir up and lift the spirit all you can. May God be praised in all things!

I trust that God will not abandon us. He is giving us men; He will also provide us with bread. At least up to now no one went hungry. God willing, no one will in the future either.

1913.XII.20

39. From a letter to Rev. Vaitkevičius in Czestochowa:

By July 25th we intend to be living at another address.We experienced a great deal of difficulty before we found a new place. We did not want to move out of the city into the country somewhere because that would have entailed considerable trouble. It was just about the last day before the twenty-fifth that we unexpectedly succeeded in finding this new dwelling. Had we not, there would have been trouble because the new owner of our former place raised the rent 340 francs. The Blessed Virgin truly helped us and that is why we have decided to make a chapel out of the handsomest room.

1914.I.30

40. From a letter to Rev. Matulaitis in London:

I think the most immoral and detestable kind of exploitation is that which operates behind the facade of religion.The moment we observe a wolf-operator of that type mingling among Christ's sheep, we should put the shepherd's crook to him and drive him forth with great clamor so as to protect the flock and prevent him from

tearing some lamb to pieces. I consider it a wicked thing to support an evident swindler and fraud because by doing so we but embolden such scoundrels to continue plying their evil trade.

1914.II.16

41. From a letter to Rev. Dvaranauskas in Pilypava:

Strive as hard as you can to sustain and strengthen your spiritual life, for this is the source of all our energies and influence among men. If at times you are unable to perform some spiritual exercise, then at least humble yourself before God and strive to lift your mind and heart to Him with short acts. Such a practice means not a little in spiritual life.

1914.II.25

42. From a letter to Rev. Gedvila in Liebau:

Memorizing sermons is perhaps not worthwhile. I never did. It is more important to collect good material, arrange it well, think it through and live it so that your words would flow from the heart. Writing out sermons is a most commendable practice.

1914.IV.1

43. From a letter to Sisters of St. Casimir

I love so much and value highly all people dedicated to God. I hope that you would say a prayer to God for me. I myself feel very blameworthy in the sight of God.

1924.XII.15

44. From a letter to the Sisters of St. Casimir

I visited the Sisters of St. Casimir. I was very happy to be their guest. I felt myself among Sisters who really have my spirit. I have always ardently loved your little family, but it seems even more so now. I am determined to help and to serve you always whatever way I can. Maybe God will grant that I will be able to come to America to talk with you longer of God and of the affairs of your Congregation.

If ever you feel the need, I ask that you always turn to me. I will try to serve you to the best of my knowledge and ability. Don't forget me in prayers that we might get to heaven to rejoice with Christ forever.

1926.VII.7